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**275 YEARS YOUNG: THE LIBRARY COMPANY OF PHILADELPHIA  
CELEBRATES MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY  
First Lending Library Founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1731**

**Philadelphia – November 08, 2006**– Today America’s oldest cultural institution, the Library Company of Philadelphia, celebrates its 275<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a gala celebration.

In 1731, at the age of 25, Benjamin Franklin and fifty of his friends founded the Library Company of Philadelphia so that people of moderate means could better themselves through reading. Today, 275 years later, the Library Company is the nation’s oldest continuously operating library and is home to more than 500,000 volumes documenting American history and culture from the 17<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The institution continues to operate as a functioning library for the general public and has relied on the support of its shareholding members since its founding and continues to do so today.

In celebration of the rich history and promising future of this cultural gem, a spectacular evening celebration, *In Good Company*, will take place this evening, November 8, 2006, from 6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. at the Ballroom at the Ben, located at 834 Chestnut Street. Funds raised from this event will be used to support the Library Company’s technology endowment fund – funding critical to ensuring the organization’s treasured collection is continuously available to the public.

“The Library Company of Philadelphia is a rare institution in as much as its entire collection – including our holdings of Medieval illuminated manuscripts – is available to the public to view, touch, and explore,” said John C. Van Horne, executive director. “It is only through the continued support of members that we are able to offer the public this level of access to the collection, and plan to continue to do so for another 275 years.”

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The Honorable Bruce James, Public Printer of the United States, will host the evening, and The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia's string quartet will provide musical accompaniment. Highly acclaimed sleight-of-hand artist and distinguished collector, Ricky Jay, will entertain the guests, speaking about his passion for collecting and curatorial expertise. Jay has recently gotten much exposure, with a role in the current film, *The Prestige* and a feature article about his work in the *New York Times* on September 27, 2006.

The Honorary Committee for the Library Company's anniversary celebration includes notable representatives of the fields that Benjamin Franklin himself distinguished during his lifetime of accomplishments. These representatives include authors, printers and publishers; scientists and inventors; statesmen and diplomats; philosophers and philanthropists; public servants; and quintessential Americans.

The Library Company of Philadelphia, founded in 1731 by Benjamin Franklin, is an independent research library encompassing over half a million rare books, prints, and photographs documenting every aspect of American history and culture from the 17th through the 19th centuries. It is a research center serving a national and international constituency of scholars and presents exhibitions and programs for the public. The Library Company is located at 1314 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107, and is open free of charge from 9:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Library Company can be found online at [www.librarycompany.org](http://www.librarycompany.org).

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